

1994

# The Impact of certification on meeting professionals who are members of Meeting Planners International

Donna Winkley

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**THE IMPACT OF CERTIFICATION ON MEETING  
PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF MEETING PLANNERS  
INTERNATIONAL**

**b y**

**DONNA WINKLEY**

**A project submitted to the faculty of the  
School of Food, Hotel, and Tourism Management  
at Rochester Institute of Technology in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of**

**Master of Science**

**July 1994**

## **ABSTRACT**

The impact of certification on meeting professionals who are members of Meeting Planners International is the focus of this project. Research is conducted by studying articles in refereed and industrial journals as well as current publications. A questionnaire is sent to randomly selected Certified Meeting Professionals.

The study uses three key indicators which are skill level, span of control, and salary level to determine if there is a direct impact on the certification of meeting planners. A time span of six months within receiving the Certified Meeting Professional designation is exercised to examine the outcomes of certification.

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
School of Food, Hotel and Travel Management  
Department of Graduate Studies

M.S. Hospitality-Tourism Management  
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Title of Research: The Impact of Certification on Meeting Professionals  
Who are Members of Meeting Planners International

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Unlike some professions, the meeting planning industry does not require a certification designation for employment. Some meeting planners do not have formal training or education in meeting planning, but do experience a wealth of learning on the job. Take for example the fictitious case of Suzanne Jones, a typical meeting planner, who has just completed her fourth year in the meeting planning industry. She began her career as a secretary and then was promoted by a major company to special events planning. Most of the time Suzanne did an adequate job in carrying out her responsibilities, but she began to wonder if there was something she could do to become more knowledgeable in this line of work. As a member of Meeting Planners International (MPI) she was aware of the variety of resources that were accessible to her to make her more effective. However, she had not utilized them. Suzanne decided to investigate the possibilities of applying for the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) examination.

Occasionally meeting planners like Suzanne will inquire about the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) examination to determine their qualifications. Contributions to the profession, management responsibility, participation in meeting management programs, and experience are some of the areas that the Convention Liaison Council (CLC) assess when qualifying an applicant. The Convention Liaison Council (CLC) is the organization that created and administers the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) examination. Suzanne decided to apply for certification because she thought it would be beneficial both to her and to her company.

Many meeting planners may believe that certification will give them augmented job performance skills which will eventually lead to promotions and increases in salary. These thoughts are all very lofty, but does certification have any real impact on the meeting planner?

### **Problem Statement**

The needs of organizations constantly change as do the meetings that they plan. This impacts the meeting professional. As more organizations plan, coordinate and carry out meetings and

conventions more certified meeting professionals may be indicated. A Certified Meeting Professional should have a higher level of expertise and knowledge about the meeting planning industry than a non-certified meeting planner. Does certification indicate professional development for the Certified Meeting Planner? This study will focus on the impact and outcomes of certification for meeting planners who are members of Meeting Planners International (MPI).

## **Background**

Meeting Planners International (MPI) is the largest association of meeting professionals with more than 12,000 members in 42 countries. Within this membership 6,192 are non-certified meeting planners, only 854 are Certified Meeting Professionals (February, 1994). The remaining membership includes suppliers and students. Sixty-one percent of all Certified Meeting Professionals (CMP) are members of Meeting Planners International (MPI).

In 1983 the Convention Liaison Council (CLC) established a certification board as requested by the MPI executive vice president, Marion Kershner. This board of eight individuals continues to

represent each of the planner groups. In addition, there is also representation from the following groups: hotel; auditorium and city; travel; and exhibits. A major board function is to manage and fund the CLC certification program.

### **The Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of certification on the professional development of meeting planners who are members of Meeting Planners International. Salary level, span of control, and skill level are the three primary criteria that are examined as professional outcomes.

### **Significance of the Study**

A review of similar studies on the effects of professional certification reveals that there are a number of motivations when seeking such a designation. This study focuses on three primary motivations that meeting planners may have in their pursuit of the CMP.

## **Methodology**

This study uses correlationals to show the impact that certification has on salary level, span of control, and skill level. Responses from questionnaires which were sent to a random list of Certified Meeting Professionals who are members of Meeting Planners International are the data base.

## **Literature Review**

Topic reviews include: meeting planning, Certified Meeting Professional, certification, survey methods, and data analysis.

Information about the aforementioned topics have been acquired from industry periodicals and professional referred journals. Staff from Meeting Planners International and The Convention Liaison Council were queried to obtain pertinent details concerning certification of meeting planners. A text book review includes authors Richard A. Hildreth, Leonard Nadler, Michele Voso, Earl Babbie, and others.

## **Hypothesis**

A reasonable expectation of this study is that Certified Meeting Professionals have a higher salary level than non-certified meeting planners. Another expectation is that the meeting planner with a certification designation has a wider span of control. A third expectation is that certification enhances the skill level for a meeting planner.

## **Definition of Terms**

Certification- The process a meeting planner completes to attain the CMP designation. Certification of competency is a two part process: Part 1 is the application, and Part 2 is the examination.

Certified Meeting Professional (CMP)- Certificates are awarded to those meeting planners who have qualified for the application through their experience, education, responsibilities, and professional contributions in Meeting Management and who have then passed the CMP examination.



Convention Liaison Council (CLC)- An organization that sets the standards for convention industry practices. This organization also develops and administers the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) examination.

Facilitator- A meeting planner whose duties entail reserving a property, sleeping rooms, food and beverage functions, audiovisual equipment, air and ground transportation, pre- and post meeting tours, on-site registration, and special events. This position is also considered a base level for a meeting planner (Hildreth 1990).

Meeting- The process of coming together for a common purpose is a general definition of meeting. Hildreth (1990) describes a meeting as the communication of intellectual and emotional stimuli to two or more people in a manner designed to secure the accomplishment of the peoples' common purpose.

Meeting Administrator- A meeting planner whose duties entail determining objectives for the meeting; projecting and managing budgets; developing agendas and meeting patterns; planning on-site registration; performing site inspections, contract negotiations; on-

site management; and post meeting evaluations. This position is a median level for a meeting planner (Hildreth 1990).

Meeting manager- A meeting planner who is an organizational communication and behavior-modification expert and usually possesses an advanced degree. Many have administrative duties that go beyond the meeting management scope. This position is considered high-level for the meeting planner (Hildreth 1990).

Meeting Planner- An individual who is a communication and information specialist and who develops a meeting plan within an organization's policies in a cost effective manner. A meeting planner may also be referred to as a meeting professional.

Meeting Planners International- An association for meeting professionals that provides opportunities for professional growth in the meetings industry. Headquartered in Dallas, TX and founded in 1972, Meeting Planners International is also referred to as MPI.

Planner group- One of the twenty-five organizations that make up the Convention Liaison Council.

Span of Control- This area consists of volume of business (number meetings planned per year), location of meetings planned (international, national, regional, and local), number of years employed in the organization, number of employees supervised, and site selection responsibility.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences- A computer program used to analyze statistical data. Also referred to as SPSS.

Suppliers- An individual or organization which provides a service for a meeting planner.

### Ideological Assumptions

Questionnaires were sent to Certified Meeting Professionals by using a simple random sampling technique. A pledge of confidentiality was included on the questionnaires. An incentive of \$1.00 was sent with the questionnaire as well as a stamped return envelope to encourage a satisfactory return rate. To decrease the “halo” effect, a set of control questions was used. Possible bias against the meeting planning profession and Meeting Planners

International (MPI) was recognized and guarded against by utilizing an established statistical package.

### **Procedural Assumptions**

It is assumed that meeting planners may acquire skills from experiences other than meeting planning. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program enables the objective correlation of data.

### **Scope and Limitations**

Sixty-one percent of Certified Meeting Professionals (CMP's) are members of Meeting Planners International (MPI). It is assumed that this population could have stronger identification with their profession than with their organization or business. This survey is limited to a random sample of Certified Meeting Planners who are members of MPI.

Following a review of the literature and collection of

information from retrieved questionnaires, the data is analyzed.

Through this analysis the value of the CMP designation is examined.

## **Procedures**

The population for this study is limited to Certified Meeting Professionals (CMP) who are members of Meeting Planners International (MPI). As of February, 1994, the membership of MPI totaled 12,318 meeting planners, students, and suppliers. Included in this figure are 854 Certified Meeting Professionals. The research division of the National Education Association provided a table for determining a sample size. According to this resource a simple random sampling of approximately 270 CMP's should be identified to receive questionnaires in the mail. All CMP's in the sample were employed in the United States.

The independent variables in this study are recognized to be the effects of certification. The dependent variable is the result of

the process of certification. The intervening variable is the degree to which certification enhances salary level, span of control, and skill level.

The instrument will use a likert-type format along with a checklist format.

After completion of the data collection, a correlational analysis is planned to compare the effects of certification to salary level, span of control, and skill level. Results of this study should be shared with Meeting Planners International and the Convention Liaison Council.

### **Long Range Consequences**

Should the findings of this study be in accordance with the hypothesis, then further studies should be conducted to examine reasons why more meeting planners are not designated CMP's.

Should the result be null to the hypothesis, additional research and study is advisable.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Several topics were the focus for the review of the literature. These areas consist of meeting planning, Certified Meeting Professional, certification, questionnaire development, and data analysis. By researching these areas, a better understanding of the nature of the work done by a meeting professional was acquired. A survey, "The impact of Certification on Meeting Professionals", was developed after this study. Additional research for parallel professional groups was reviewed to gain an understanding of the value of certification designations. They are identified later in this review.

#### Meeting Planning

Several books served as a foundation for understanding the context of responsibilities of the meeting professional. Nadler and Nadler's (1987) The Comprehensive Guide to Successful Conferences and Meetings provides a guide for the meeting planner to utilize

when arranging meetings. Sample forms and checklists are provided for the meeting planner to employ so that nothing is forgotten or left out of the meeting plan.

The Convention and Meeting Planner's Handbook by Michele Voso (1990) is another book that gives a comprehensive view of the meeting profession. Voso provides forms, charts, and figures to assist the meeting planner. A basic overview of meeting planning is available along with a variety of topics which are relevant to the profession (ie. ethics, logistics, communication, safety, and security).

Professional Meeting Management, by the Professional Convention Management Association (1988), is an important reference for the meeting professional. This book offers advice on all aspects of professional meeting management. Responsibilities and the type of work a meeting professional undertakes is described in detail.

Richard A. Hildreth's (1990) The Essentials of Meeting Management identifies three levels of jobs within the meeting field: facilitator, manager, and administrator. These three job levels outline skill and management levels utilized in this study. He defines



the facilitator as a secretary, a convention services manager in a hotel or convention bureau, ground operators, travel agents, and/or others in the industry. The facilitator's duties usually consist of: property and sleeping room reservations; food and beverage functions; audiovisual equipment; air and ground transportation; pre and postmeeting tours; on-site registration; and special events. The meeting manager's duties may entail: determining objectives for the meeting; projecting and managing budgets; developing agendas and meeting patterns; planning on site-registration; performing site inspections; contract negotiations; on-site management; and postmeeting evaluations. A meeting administrator's duties are primarily comprised of the management and problem solving functions. In addition, they are also organizational, communication, and behavior modification experts. Hildreth (1990, p.5) states, "Most hold advanced degrees in communication, business, adult learning, or some aspect of psychology."

The Convention Liaison Council's CMP Information Package outlines twenty-five meeting planning functions which are included on the CMP examination (Figure 1). These functions are also used as determinants for skill level on the questionnaire for this study.

# **MAJOR MEETING PLANNING FUNCTIONS**

The board of Directors of the Certified Meeting Professional Program (an activity of the Convention Liaison Council) has identified 25 separate functions involved in a major meeting. These are:

1. Establishing meeting design and objectives;
2. Selecting site and facilities;
3. Negotiating with facilities;
4. Budgeting;
5. Handling reservations and housing;
6. Choosing among transportation options, both air and ground;
7. Planning programs;
8. Planning guidebook, staging guide, and documentation specifications;
9. Establishing registration procedures;
10. Arranging for and using support services: convention bureau, outside services, hospitality committee;
11. Coordinating with convention center or hall;
12. Planning with convention services manager;
13. Briefing facilities staff;
14. Shipping;
15. Planning function-room set up;
16. Managing exhibits;
17. Managing food and beverage;
18. Determining audio/visual requirements;
19. Selecting speakers;
20. Booking entertainment;
21. Scheduling promotion and publicity;
22. Developing guest and family programs;
23. Producing and printing meeting materials;
24. Distributing gratuities; and
25. Evaluating after the meeting.

**Figure 1. Major Meeting planning functions.**

Reviewed Periodicals assisted to verify salary level scales, meeting planning employment, and budget scales that were utilized on the questionnaire. These articles include: *MPI's 1993 Buying Power Report* and *The 1993 Association Planner Salary Survey*. Industry periodicals give insight into the changing role of the meeting professional. As the meeting planning industry expands, the evolution of a recognizable professional with a more holistic approach to planning meetings is being developed. Crystal (1991) states that, "... meeting planning is just beginning to receive professional recognition. This is due in part to the birth of the CMP exam which was administered for the first time in June of 1985."

Chon and Feiertag (1990) studied the level of importance of the twenty-five skills and functions of a meeting manager. The population of their study was Certified Meeting Professionals. The results of their study helped to establish the meeting functions selected for determining the impact of certification on meeting professionals.

## Certified Meeting Professional

Limited literary resources are available on the Certified Meeting Professional. A variety of views from certified and noncertified meeting professionals are shared in David Meyer's (1993) article concerning the value of the CMP designation. Those surveyed with the designation felt that it enhanced their ability to do a job well. He suggests that the CMP designation sets those meeting professionals apart from the others in a profession that is rapidly growing. On the other hand, some meeting professionals state that they have no intention to sit for the examination. These planners may have been with a particular organization for a specific period of time and may not feel that the designation will be beneficial.

Successful Meetings (April 1994) recently surveyed 140 non-certified meeting planners and found that twenty-two percent of them had not heard of the CMP designation. This population not holding the designation did not feel that it has any negative impact on their career. Weiland (1994) mentioned that there is a debate taking place on whether the CMP exam addresses the current needs of the industry. He found that those who support the designation feel that it is the best instrument available to assess the planner

even though the exam may need some changes. Thirty percent of the respondents in the aforementioned study stated that they are planning to sit for the CMP examination. In the wake of all this discussion, MPI has created a task force to study the feasibility of creating an optional senior level certification program.

A supplement to Meeting & Conventions (1989) highlighted the CMP advantage. Included are interviews with four of the first holders of the CMP designation, a guide to meeting planning courses, the creation of the CMP program, suggestions for studying for the exam, an evaluation of the test, examples of how other professions use certification, and the anticipated CMP designation payoff. In this special issue, Varney (1989) stated that some motivators for obtaining the designation entail professional recognition, personal satisfaction, and job enhancement. Some CMP's also felt that the designation will provide them with an increase in salary, career advancement, and a competitive edge in finding employment.

The CMP Information Package (1993) emphasized that the CMP designation will gain future impact. This booklet (p. 6) defined a CMP as, "...a planner who is up-to-date in that (meeting planning)

knowledge, one who has done some studying and has not relied solely on experience or on-the-job training to achieve their total education.”

### **Certification**

A review of studies on similar professions revealed there are a number of motivations involved with the seeking of a certification designation. Certification of business travel managers, human resource managers, interior designers, insurance agents, and appraisers are described in the special edition of Meeting & Conventions (1989). Prestige, respect from peers and the industry, and personal satisfaction are the main reasons professionals sit for their perspective certification examination.

E.J. Muller (1993) asked the question, “Is certification in the logistics area worth it”? This study on the impact of certification revealed that the majority of those certified have a vast knowledge of the profession and greater professionalism. Secondly, certification added clout to the resume. Finally, an increase in stature and the development of a networking system was created through certification.

## Survey Methods

Babbie (1990) provided insight into the logic of survey sampling and gave examples of sample and questionnaire designs. Don A. Dillman's Mail and Telephone Surveys (1978, p. 120) defined the total design method (TDM) as, "...based on the identification of how each aspect of the questionnaire, from the most obvious to the least obvious, may affect the recipient's decision to respond." The TDM was employed for this survey.

## Data Analysis

Schermerhorn (1984) outlined the Hawthorne studies which took place in 1924 at the Western Electric Company's Chicago plant. Taylor's first principle of scientific management was what the company was interested in examining by studying the effects of physical working conditions on individual work outputs. The Hawthorne effect is described as the tendency of people who are singled out for special attention to perform or act as anticipated merely because of the expectations created by the situation. Workers may increase productivity because this is what the researchers wanted to occur. In the case of individuals holding a

CMP designation it is critical to keep the Hawthorne effect in mind when data is analyzed. Certified Meeting Professionals may answer the questionnaires in a positive manner as they anticipate that this is what is expected by individuals who have been singled out as members of an elite group. The SPSS-X Users Guide (1988) furnished a handbook for writing a data analysis computer program. This guide defined the language and explained the procedures of SPSS-X to assess data in an objective manner.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Data Collecting

The population of this study consisted of Certified Meeting Professionals who are members of Meeting Planners International. A questionnaire was sent to 270 of the 854 Certified Meeting Professionals to determine how certification impacts their skill level, span of control, and salary level.

Prior to sending the questionnaires a pretest was conducted on the instrument. Several Certified Meeting Professionals who were not included in the study examined the survey and then made comments on the content as well as the format. These CMP's consisted of corporate, association, and independent planners. This took place via a facsimile machine and telephone. After compiling these a few additions and editorial changes were completed. The CMP's felt that the layout of the questionnaire was understandable and easy to read.

A systematic random sampling of the population was employed. Every third person in the alphabetized CMP membership list of The MPI 1994 Membership Directory was selected until the population size of 270 was attained. Babbie (1990) was used as a guide in determining the sampling method and procedure.

To augment the returns, a dollar bill was enclosed with each questionnaire. This token 'thanks' was utilized as a motivator to increase the number and timeliness of responses. The surveys were printed on cream paper instead of white paper for eye appeal. An addressed stamped envelope was enclosed to facilitate the return mailing of the completed questionnaire. A likert scale and checklist format were used.

The time period allotted for the questionnaire returns was ten business days. Within this time 157 (58.15%) of the surveys were answered and returned.

### **Procedure of Analysis**

The results of the questionnaire are divided into four areas: skill level, span of control, salary, and demographics.

Bar graphs were used to show the impact of certification on skill level. Each meeting planning function was divided into the following categories: never do; sometimes do; and always do. Graphs show the nature of the work that occupied a Certified Meeting Professional.

A time frame of six months within certification was used to determine span of control changes. It is expected that one-fourth to one-third of the meeting planners earned their designation within the past year. Responses to span of control questions were answered by marking: decreased; remained the same; or increased. Following this section were control questions which dealt with budget allotment increases, job responsibilities, and salaries of employees. The final section that dealt with this area utilized a checklist type format.

Salary level inquiries and demographics were included as a subsection of the survey. Pie charts and bar graphs are used to show results.

All data was analyzed by the SPSS computer program. This program used the frequency of an answer to a question and provided a percentage for that answer. The program then continued to run to

obtain a valid percent and configured the mean, mode, median, and a variety of other statistics to determine correctness.

## **Findings**

### **Skill Level**

Three options of never do, sometimes do, and always do were given to determine skill level of the CMP (Figures 2-6).

Based on Hildreth's (1990) job level categories the facilitator, or base level skill, showed the least amount of percentage responses. The behind the scenes work of a facilitator included reserving a property, sleeping rooms, food and beverage functions, audiovisual equipment, air and ground transportation, pre- and postmeeting tours, on-site registration, and special events.

The majority of the respondents selected the meeting manager category. The areas of responsibility for a meeting manager consisted of establishing meeting goals and objectives, setting budget guidelines, developing agendas and meeting patterns, planning on

# SKILL LEVEL

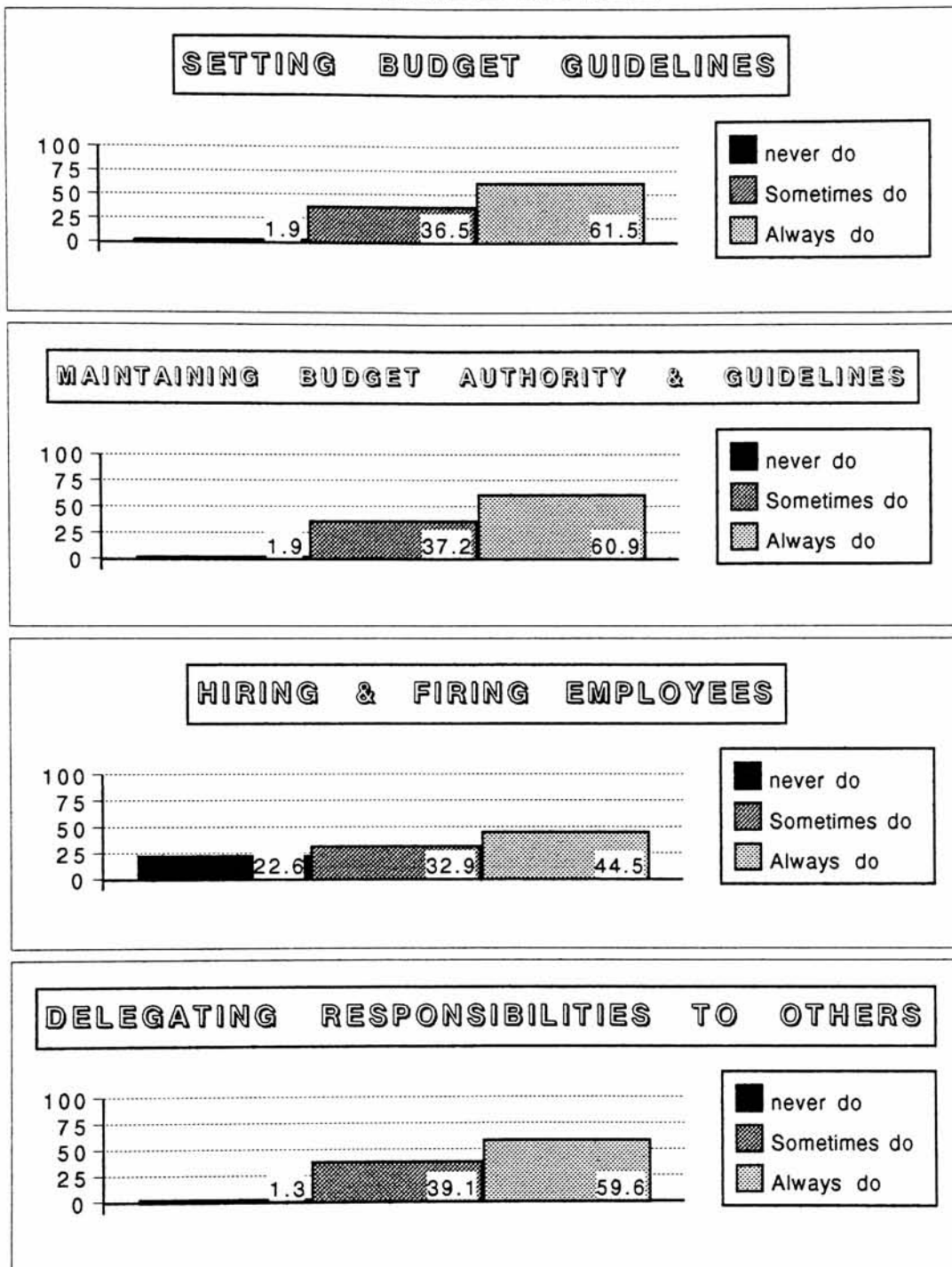


Figure 2: SKILL LEVEL

## SKILL LEVEL

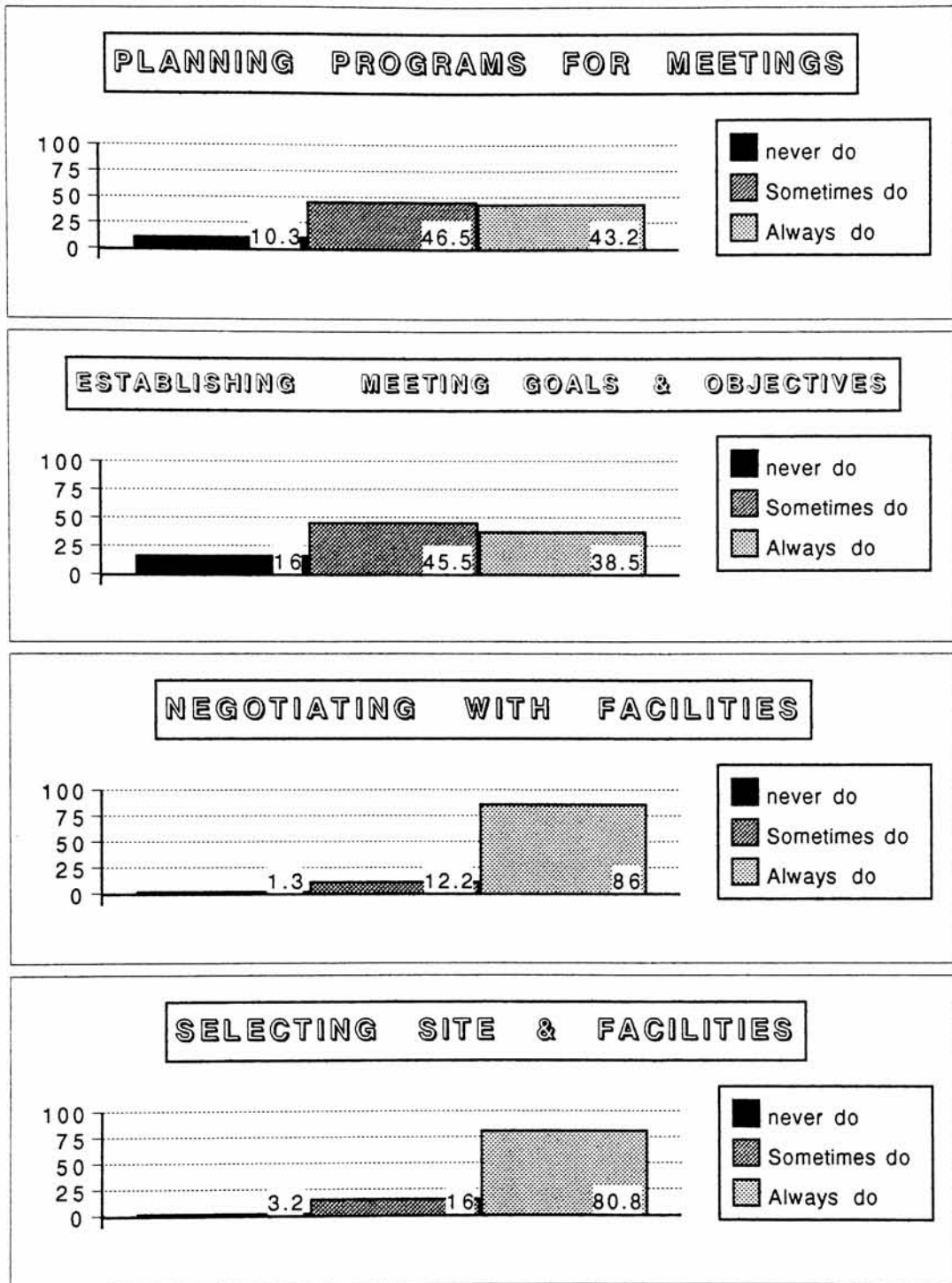


Figure 3: SKILL LEVEL

## SKILL LEVEL

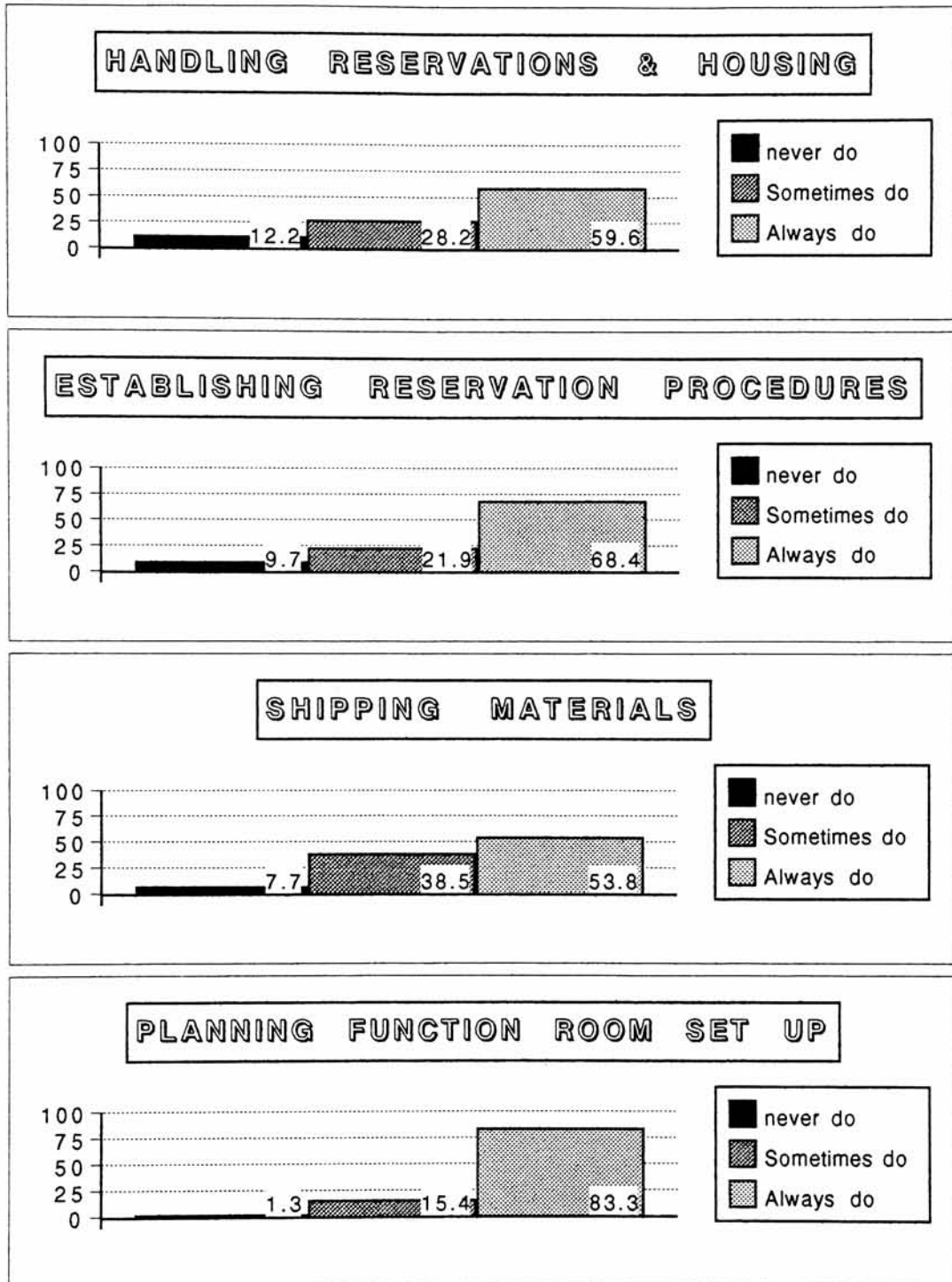
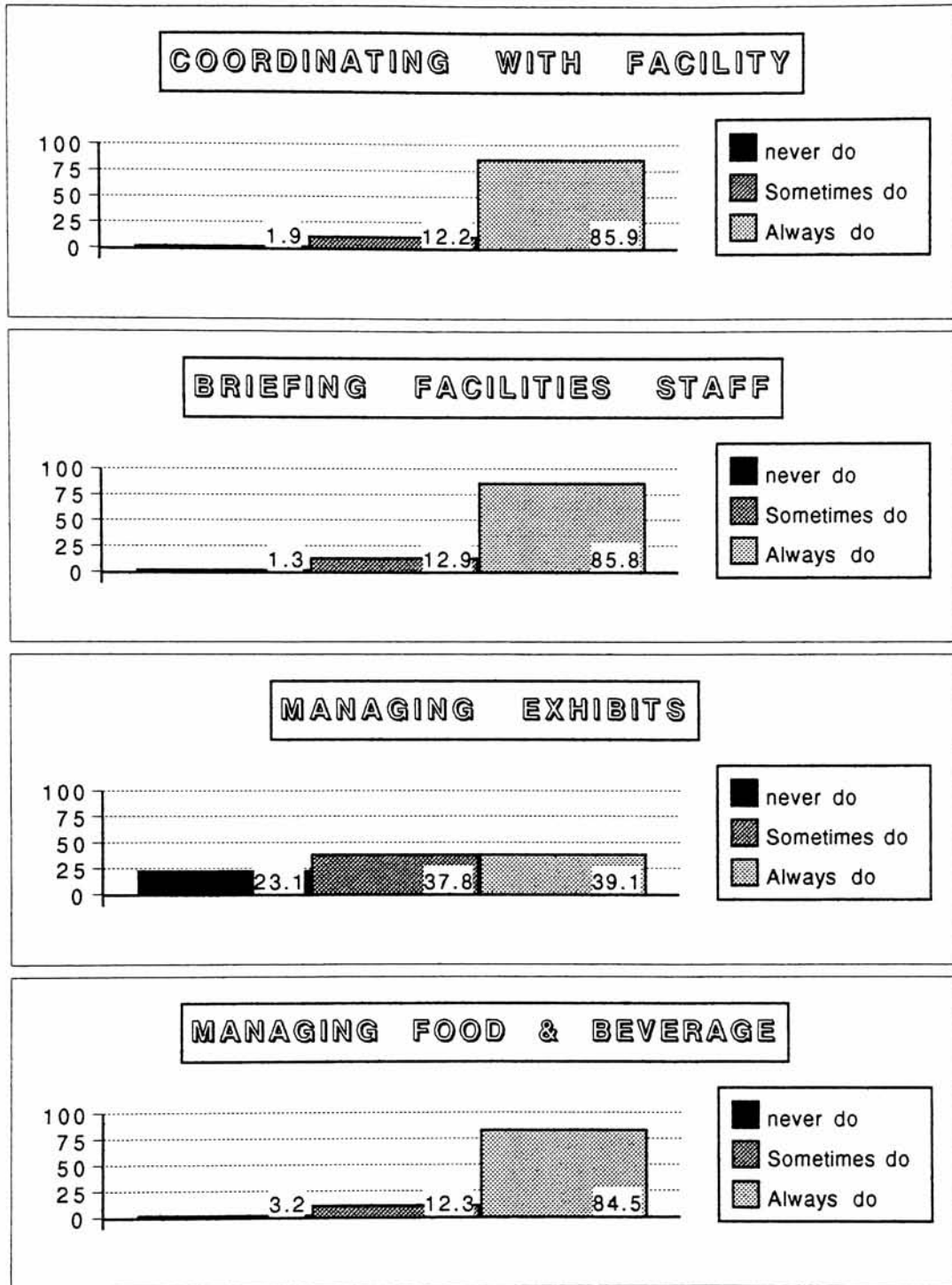


Figure 4: SKILL LEVEL

# SKILL LEVEL



**Figure 5: SKILL LEVEL**



## SKILL LEVEL

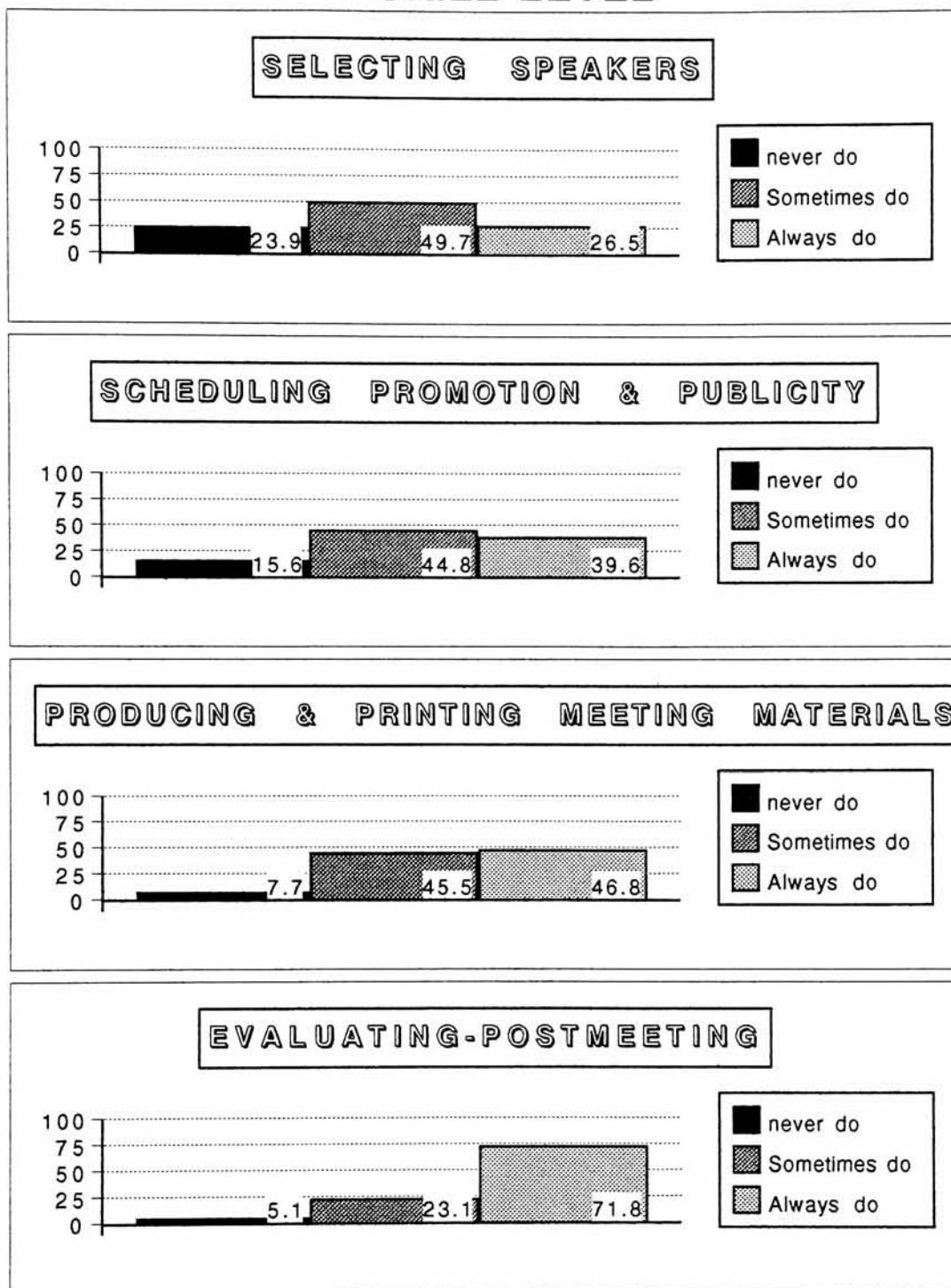


Figure 6: SKILL LEVEL

site reservation procedures, performing site inspections, negotiating with facilities, on site management, and post meeting evaluations.

Following the results of the meeting manager skill level was that of the meeting administrator. Hildreth (1990) suggested that a meeting administrator normally has some type of advanced degree. Approximately 22.4% of those surveyed replied that they had done post-graduate work. Administrative duties of this skill level went beyond that of the meeting manager.

#### Span of Control

Choices of decreased, remained the same, and increased (within 6 months) were delineated on the survey for questions dealing with span of control (Figure 7). The results showed that the number of employees supervised remained constant for 78.1% of the respondents. An increase was shown for 17.2% of the respondents and a decrease was noted with 4.6%. The majority of CMP's supervised under 5 employees (59.4%) followed by 21.3% not supervising any employees (Figure 8).

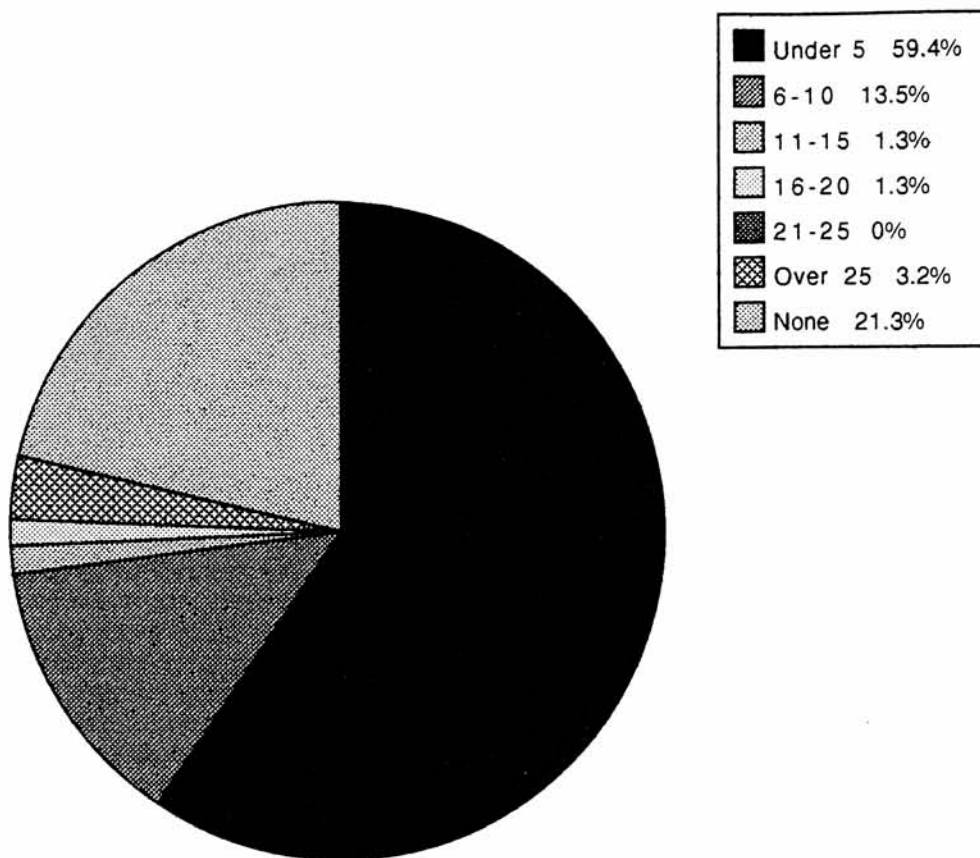
The number of meetings planned per year remained approximately the same at 60.1%. Of the respondents 34.6% showed

# SPAN OF CONTROL

	<u>DECREASED</u>	<u>REMAINED THE SAME</u>	<u>INCREASED</u>
<u>Number of employees supervised</u>	4.6%	78.1%	17.2%
<u>Number of meetings planned per year</u>	5.2%	60.1%	34.6%
<u>Budget allotment</u>	5.3%	69.7%	25.0%
<u>Approval of meeting location</u>	2.6%	84.8%	12.6%
<u>Job responsibilities</u>	2.0%	66.4%	31.6%
<u>Salary level</u>	2.6%	64.7%	32.7%
<u>Site selection responsibilities</u>	2.0%	84.9%	13.2%

**Figure 7: SPAN OF CONTROL**

## EMPLOYEES SUPERVISED



**Figure 8: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES SUPERVISED**

a slight increase in meetings planned and 5.2% had a decrease in this area.

In the area of budget allotment 69.7% CMP's reported that this area remained the same after certification. Twenty-five percent showed an increase, while 5.3% had a decrease. A control question requested the respondent to list one area of the budget in which there had been an increase. Those meeting planners who positively answered that their budget increased also listed an area within the budget that showed an increase (Figure 9). Of the 25% who saw an increase in the budget, 28.7% listed an area that had been expanded. Conversely, 3.7% of those who listed an area of their budget that had increased did not check an increase in budget allotment.

In the meeting location approval area 84.8% of the respondents replied that their responsibility had remained the same. There was an increase of 12.2% and decrease of 2.5% shown for the approval of a meeting location.

Meetings planned for 1994 showed that 24.7% of the respondents planned under 10; 22.7% planned between 11-20; and

# AREAS OF BUDGET INCREASE

	Percent
Not applicable----->	71.7
Registration fees / income----->	4.3
Special events----->	4.3
Meetings / conventions----->	3.6
Promotional materials----->	2.2
Staff increase and education----->	2.2
Travel----->	.2
Sales incentive program----->	1.4
Telephone / facsimile----->	1.4
Speakers----->	1.4
Evaluation process----->	.7

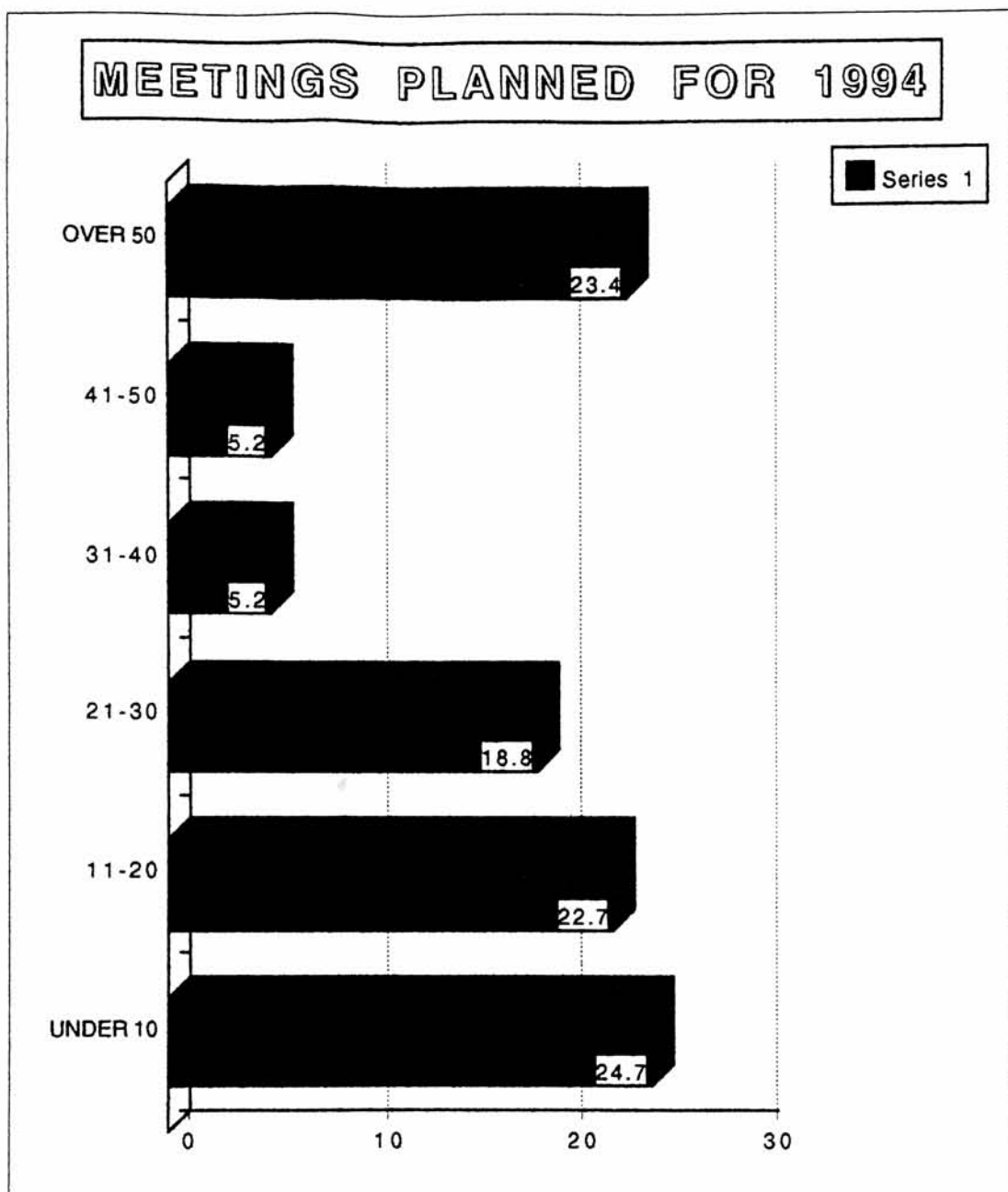
**Figure 9: AREAS OF BUDGET INCREASE**

23.4% planned over 50 (Figure 10). The type of meetings that CMP's plan include international meetings (31.8%), national meetings (70.1%), regional meetings (66.2%), and local meetings (62.4%) (Figure 11).

The majority of CMP's surveyed reported that their job responsibilities remained the same (66.4%). Only a few stated that there was a decrease in job responsibilities (2%). However, nearly one-third (31.6%) of the respondents experienced an increase in this area. Only 29.3% of the respondents answered the control question. Of this number, 2.3% answered an increase in job responsibilities but did not list an additional responsibility (Figure 12).

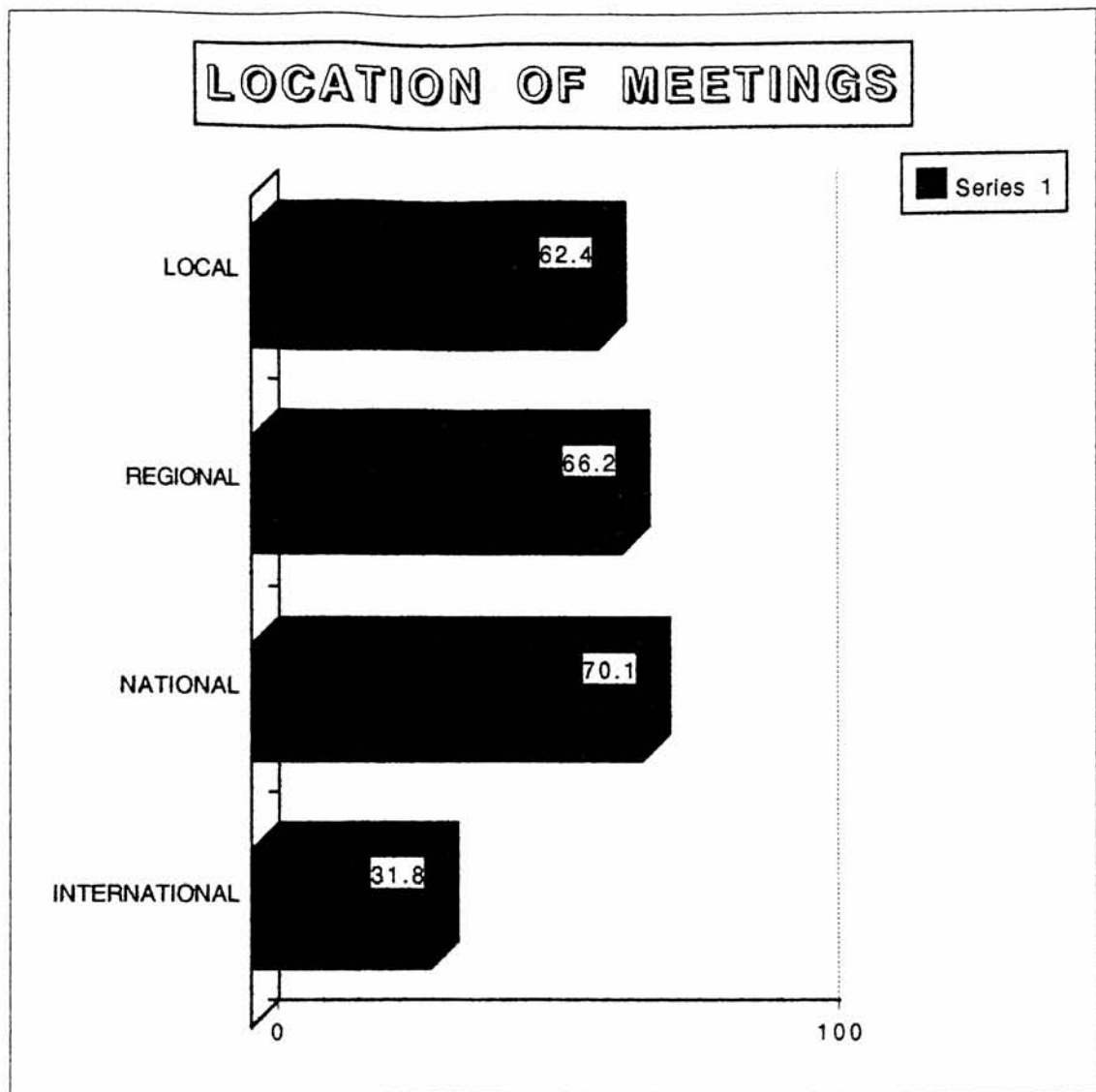
### Salary

The majority of salary levels for the CMP remained the same (64.7%) within a time span of six months after receiving certification. However, in a similar question regarding salary level only 44.5% said that there was no change in salary in a six month time frame (Figure 13). A 1993 gross salary of \$40,000-\$49,999 was received by 22%



**Figure 10: MEETINGS PLANNED FOR 1994**





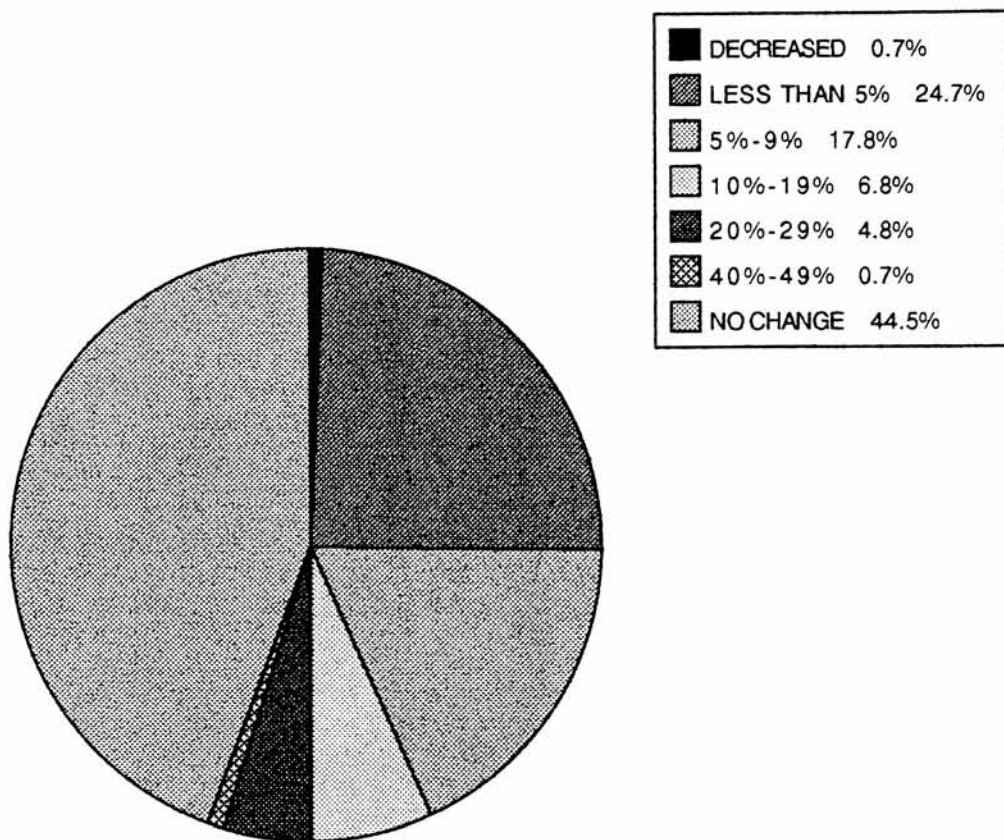
**Figure 11: LOCATION OF MEETINGS**

# ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

	Percent
Not applicable-----	>63
Marketing-----	>1.4
International meetings-----	> .7
Speakers-----	> 1.4
Site selection-----	> 2.2
Promotion-----	> 4.3
Travel program-----	> 3.6
Trade shows-----	> 2.2
Employee supervision-----	> 2.2
Budgeting-----	> 2.9
Meeting planning-----	> 7.2
Setting goals and objectives-----	> .7
Staff education-----	> 2.9
Choosing program contents-----	>2.2
Equipment / audio visual-----	>1.4
Advising board of directors-----	> .7
Negotiations-----	> .7

**Figure 12: ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

## SALARY CHANGE



**Figure 13: CMP SALARY CHANGE**

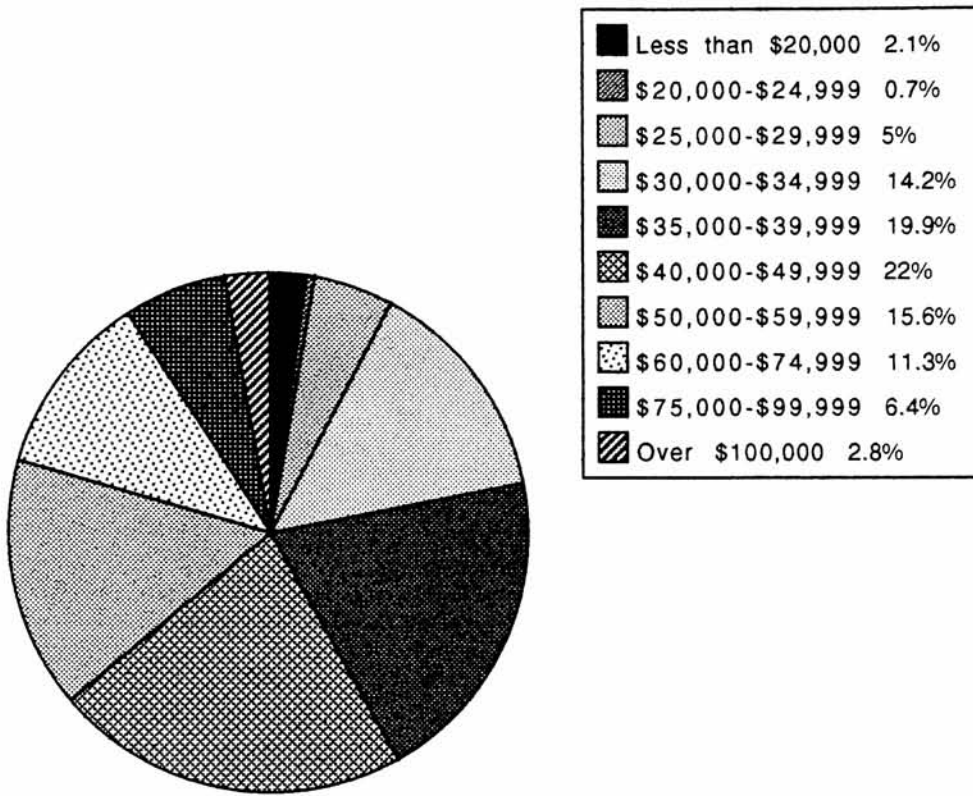
of the respondents. The next highest percent (19.9%) earned between \$35,000-\$39,999 (Figure 14).

To determine if salary growth within six months of receiving the CMP designation was due to an overall departmental salary increase, a question concerning employees' salaries was utilized. Only 8.1% of the respondents said that employees' salaries increased after they had received their CMP designation (Figure 15).

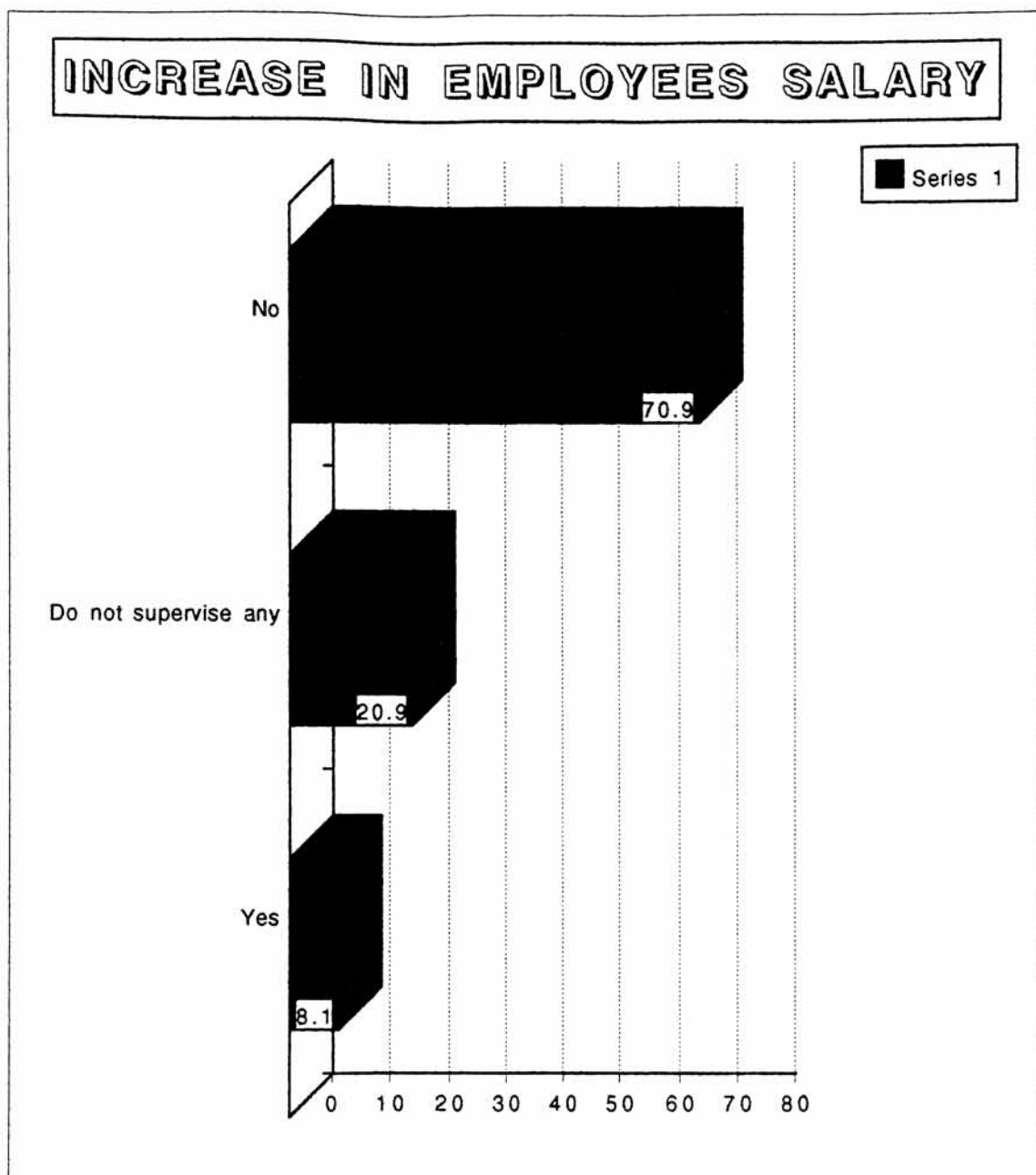
### Demographics

Based on the findings of this survey the typical CMP is 36-45 year old (46.1%), female (80.3%), with a Bachelor's Degree (41.4%) (Figures 16-18). This young female professional has, on the average, 8 years of meeting planning experience (11.8%) and has held a CMP designation for 1 year (27.2%) (Figures 19-20). This meeting planner would have between 4-10 years (45.9%) work experience in either a corporate (34.2%) or association (32.2%) setting (Figures 21-22). Of the respondents, 25.7% claimed to have had a 1993 budget between \$50,001-\$250,000. The next highest number, 17.9%, had over \$1,750,000 budgeted in 1993 (Figure 23).

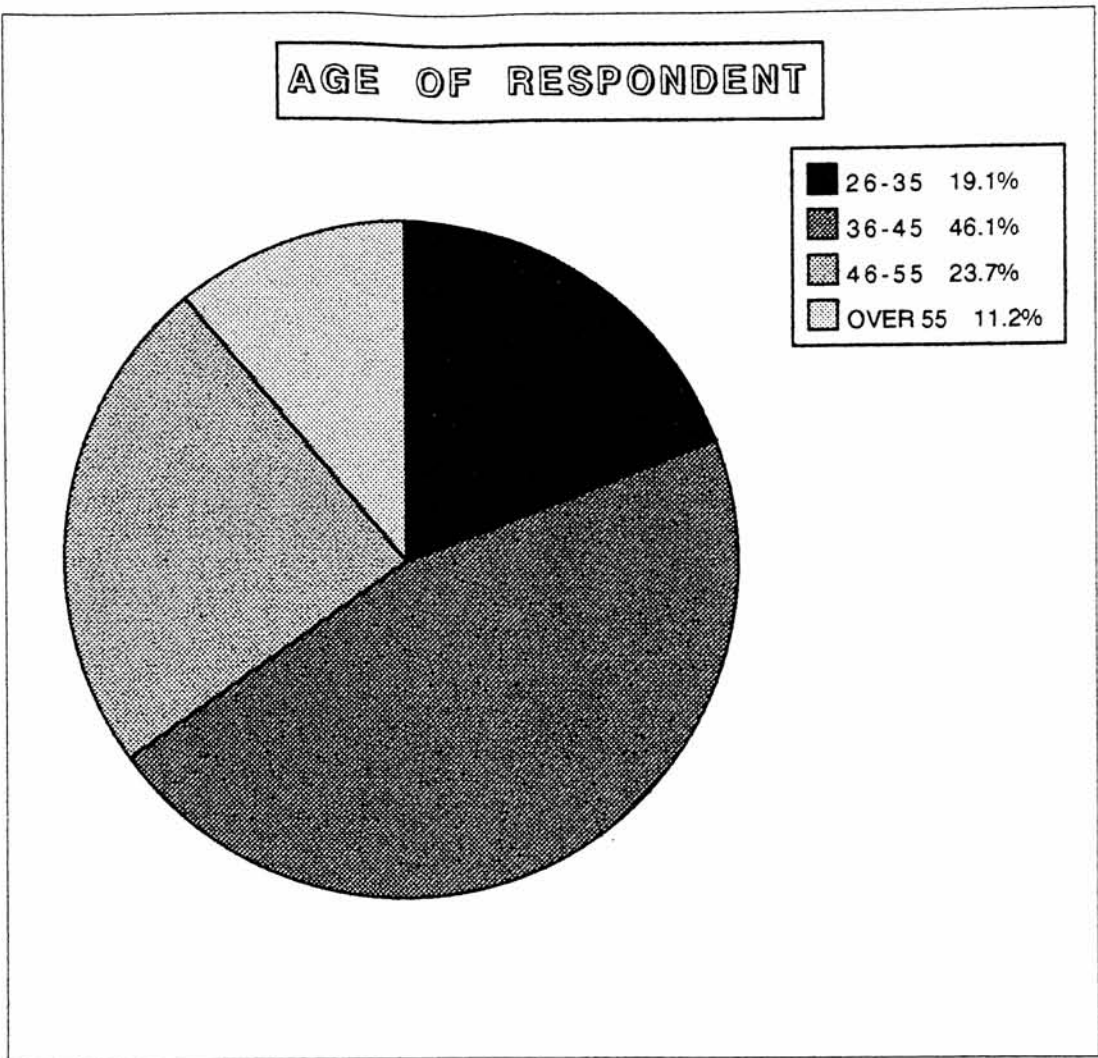
## CMP SALARY



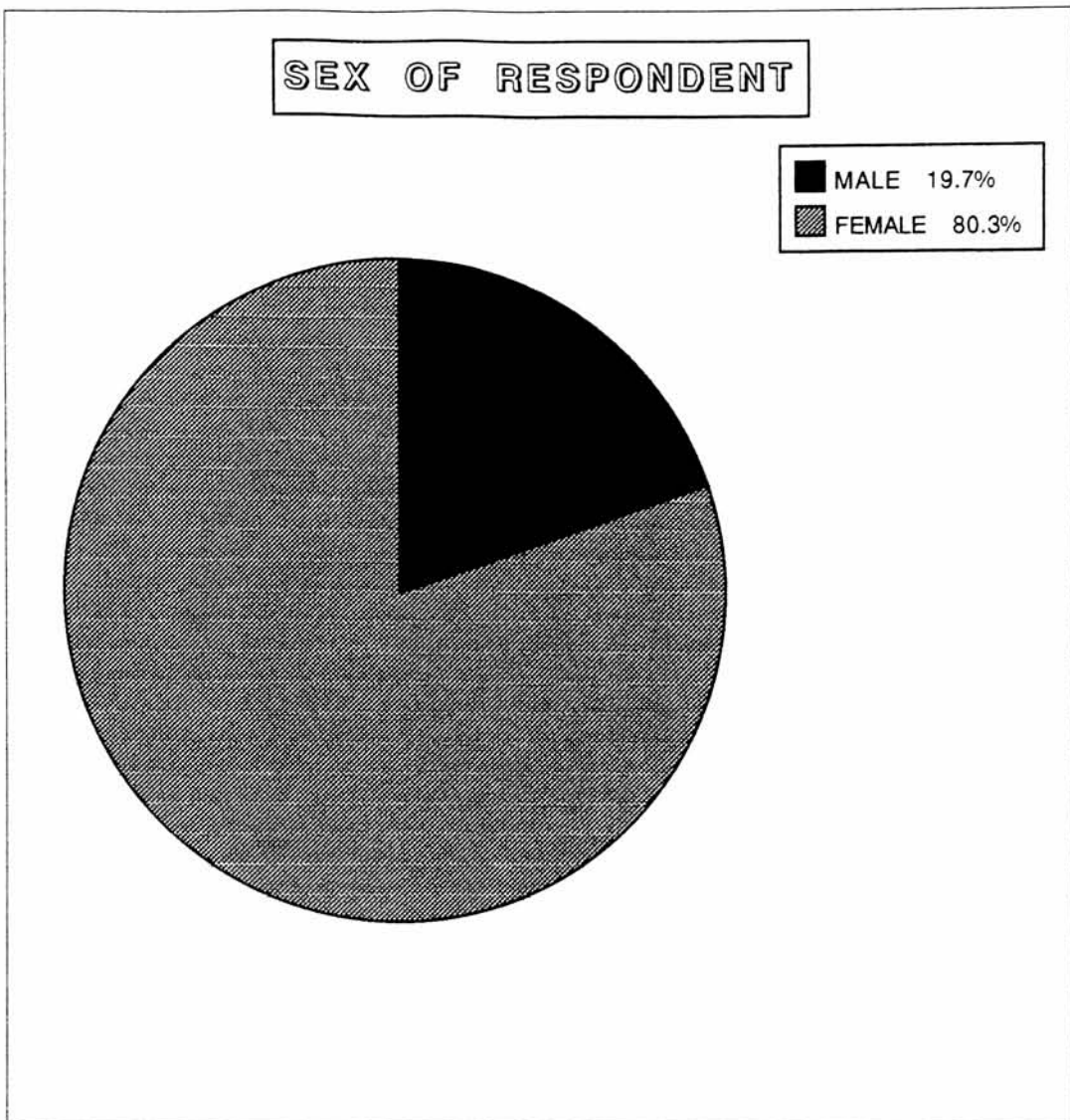
**Figure 14: CMP SALARY**



**Figure 15: CHANGE IN EMPLOYEES' SALARY**



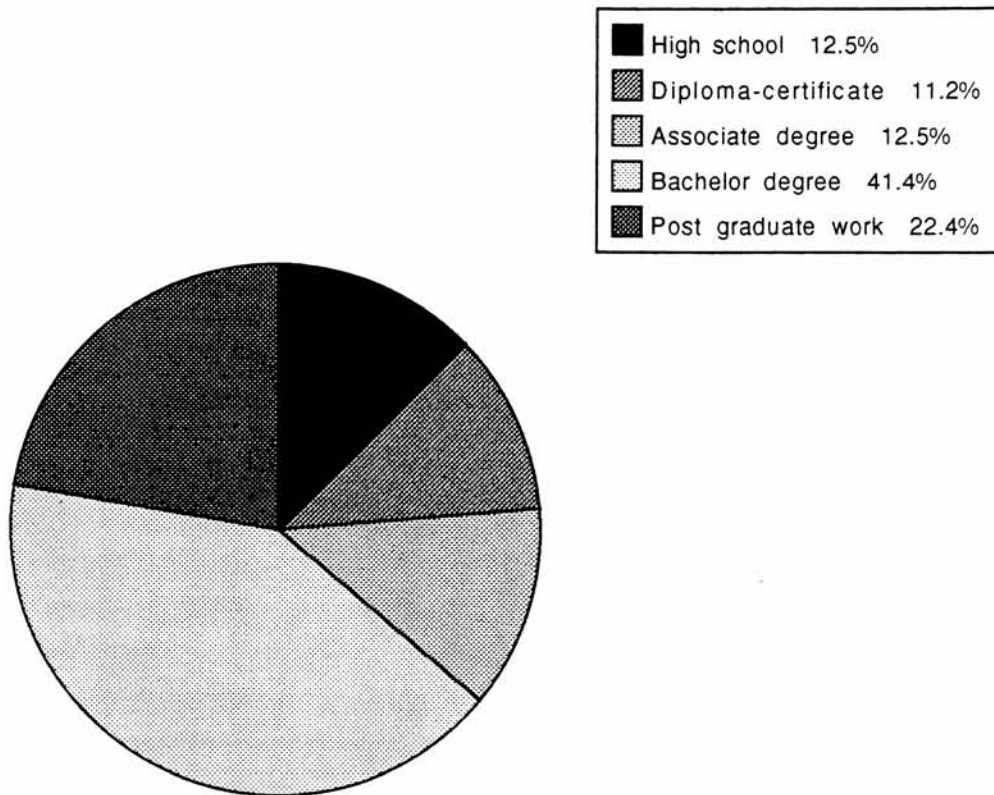
**Figure 16: CMP AGE**



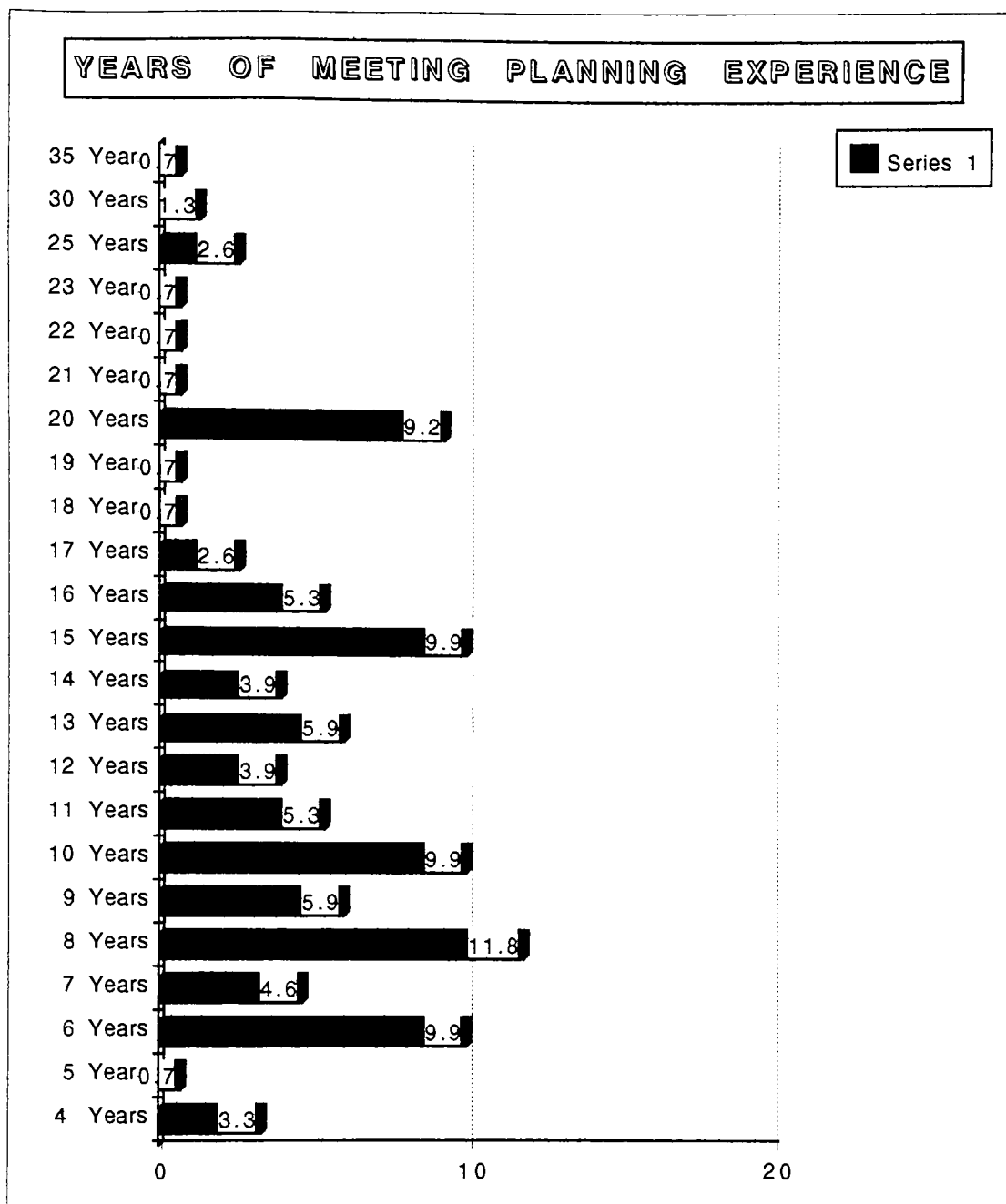
**Figure 17: CMP SEX**



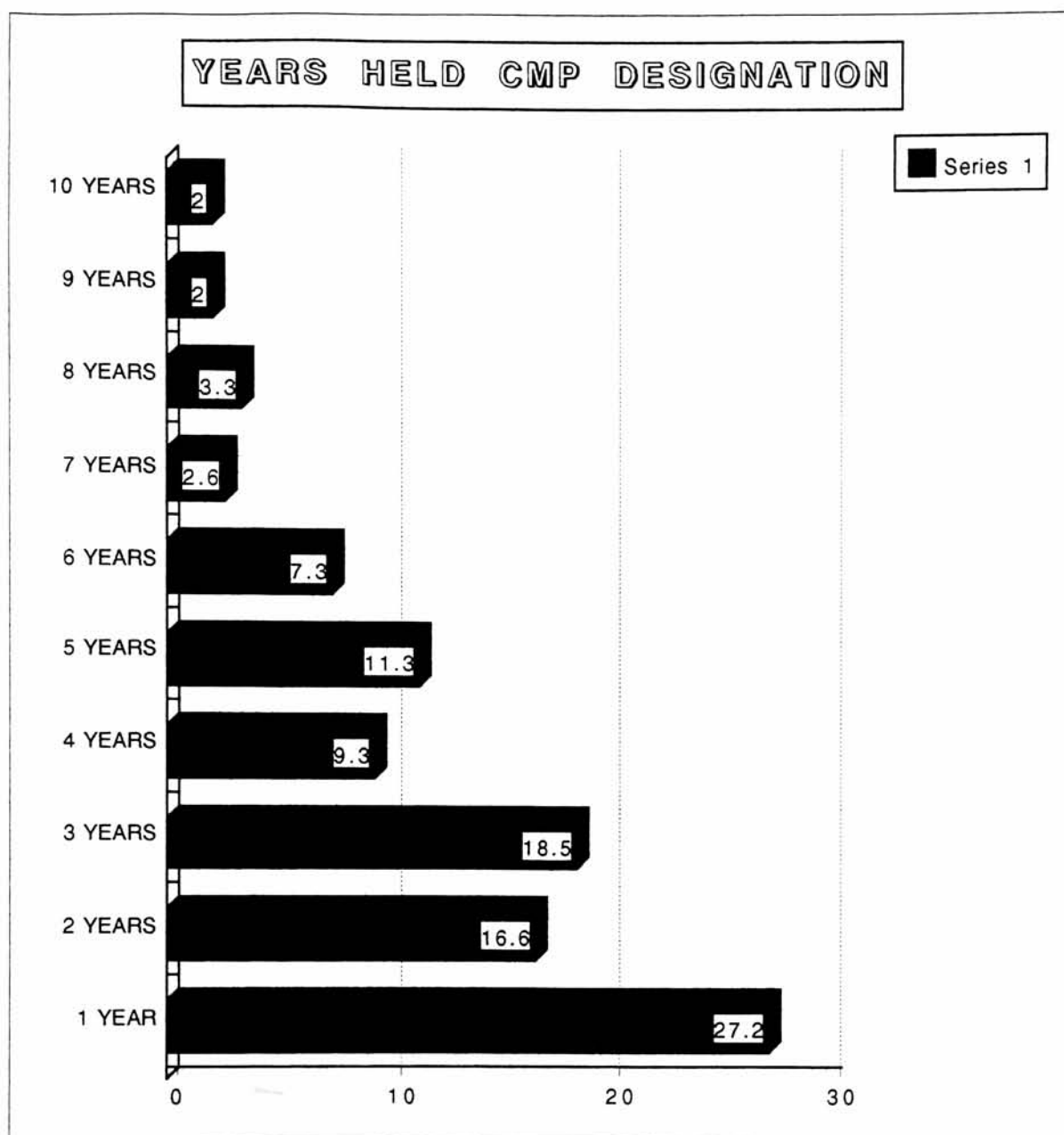
## CMP EDUCATIONAL LEVEL



**Figure 18: CMP EDUCATIONAL LEVEL**

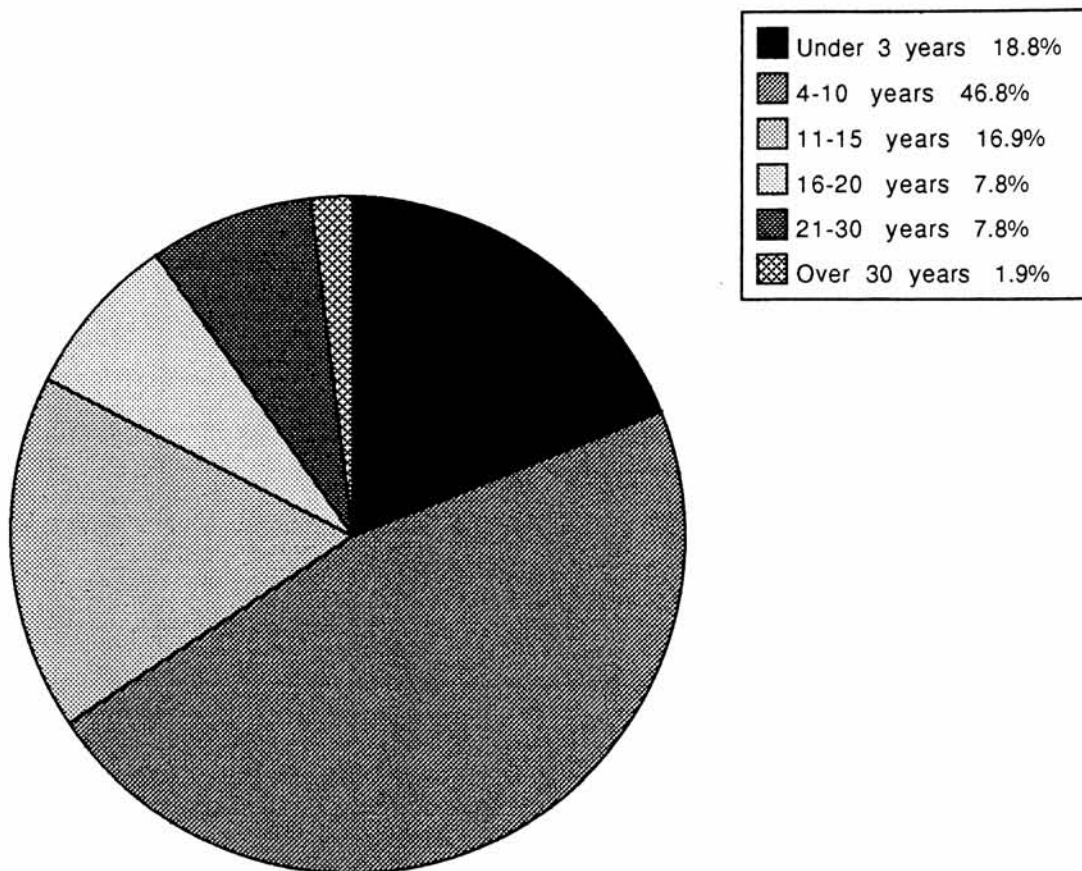


**Figure 19: YEARS OF MEETING PLANNING EXPERIENCE**

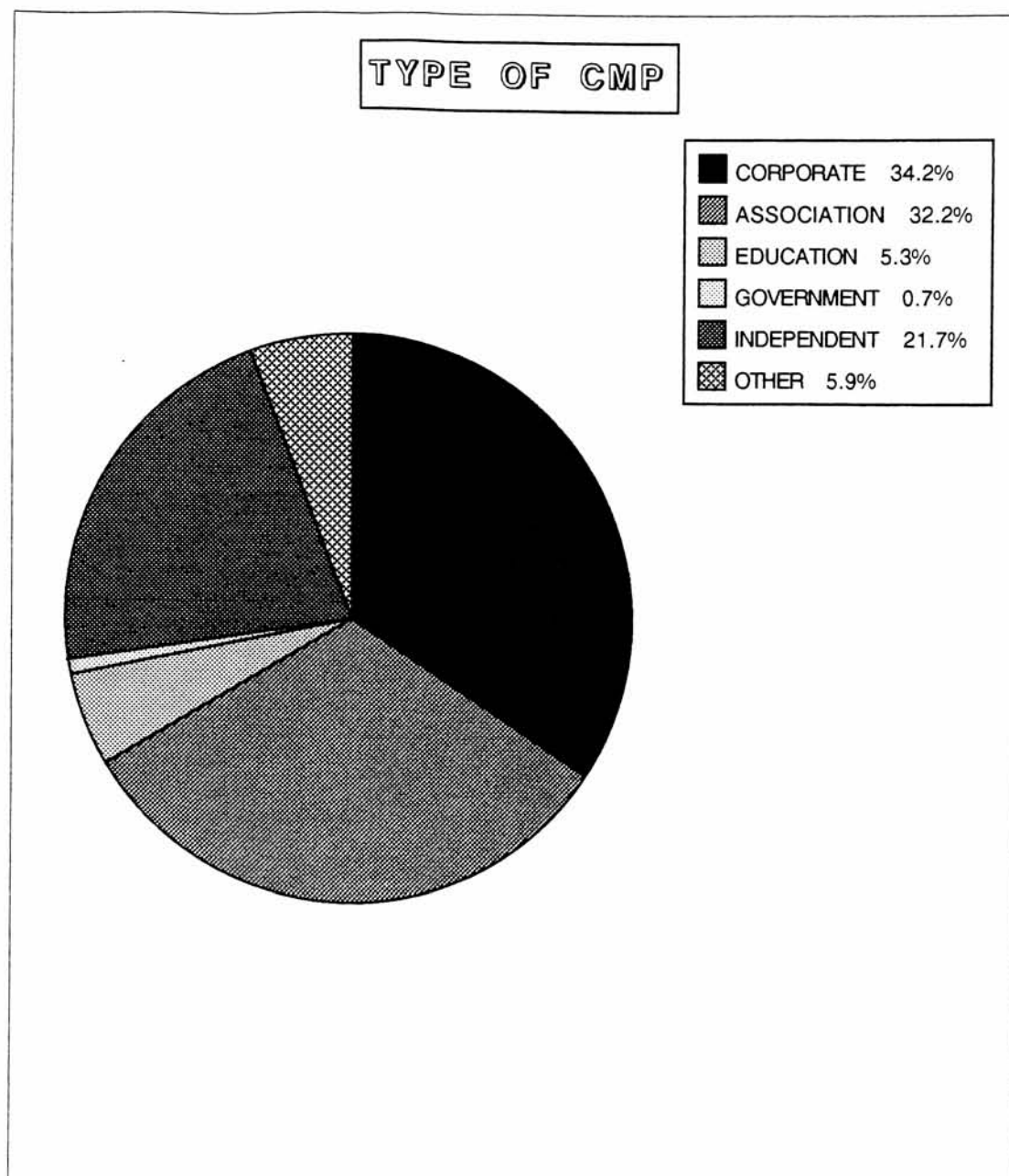


**Figure 20: YEARS HELD CMP DESIGNATION**

## YEARS WORKING IN ORGANIZATION

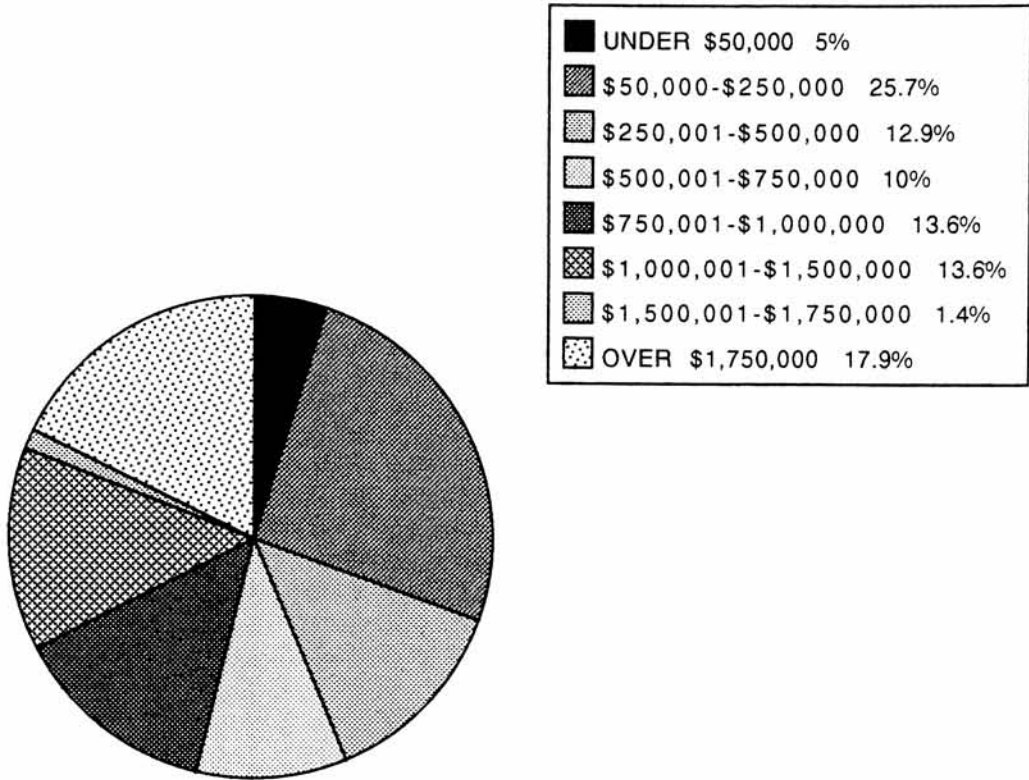


**Figure 21: YEARS WORKING IN ORGANIZATION**



**Figure 22: TYPE OF CMP**

## BUDGET



**Figure 23: BUDGET FOR 1994**

## **Conclusions**

Based on the research for this project, certification had no significant impact on meeting professionals in the area of skill level, span of control, and salary level. Therefore, the original hypothesis of this study is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted. Further study needs to be conducted to determine the outcomes of certification for a meeting professional.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The meeting planning industry is continuously changing and the CMP is slowly gaining respect as a professional. Changes seem to be a result of new technology and the variety of needs that each meeting demands. Meeting planners are beginning to be recognized and associated with their profession as evident by enrollment increases in professional organizations like Meeting Planners International. This seems to have an increased identity rather than titles within each perspective organization.

The skill of meeting planning may be assimilated on the job as well as through books and literature. The CMP designation recognizes this skill attainment.

No significant impact for respondents who have earned the CMP designation has been shown in the three areas studied: skill level, span of control, and salary level.



## Recommendations

This research could be expanded to a longer time span, such as one year, two years, and five years. By expanding the time periods it would be possible to examine the impact of certification on the experienced holder of this designation.

A comparison study between non-certified and certified meeting professionals for short and long time periods is recommended. This type of study could more clearly define areas that are impacted by the CMP designation.

A further recommendation would be to broaden the study to include areas that have not been examined, such as self esteem and employability. It would be valuable to research self esteem to discover if designation creates confidence for the meeting professional. This, in turn, would assist the CMP to carry out job responsibilities. As Waterman, Waterman, and Collard point out in their article *Toward A Career-Resilient Workforce* (1994 p.87) , “...what matters now is having the competitive skills required to find work when we need it, wherever we can find it.” They go on further and state (1994 p.88), “...a company that can thrive in an era in

which the skills needed to remain competitive are changing at a dizzying pace.” Studying the area of employability would help to determine if certification provides the outcome of competitive skills.

A fourth recommendation incorporates the work of the special MPI task committee that is exploring the prospect of a senior level certification program. A study should be employed to determine the need of an advanced certification program. If the existing CMP designation does not meet the current needs of a meeting planner, why is a senior level designation necessary?

The CMP certification process needs to be compared to other successful professional designations. As suggested in the review of the literature some suggested professions for this study include: business travel managers; human resource managers; interior designers; insurance agents; and appraisers. This would provide insight into the development and acceptance of professionalism in the industry.

A study should be undertaken of the curriculum that leads to certification which examines the relationship between job functions and skills measured.

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APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE

May 27, 1994

School of Food, Hotel and Travel  
Management  
Department of Graduate Studies  
George Eastman Building  
10 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, New York 14623-5604  
716-475-5666 Fax 716-475-6401

Dear Certified Meeting Professional:

Enclosed is a questionnaire on "The impact of certification on meeting professionals." Please take a moment of your time to complete this survey and return it to us using the enclosed self-addresses stamped envelope.

Your contribution to this study will result in a better understanding of industry perceptions of the CMP designation. This research will focus on the outcomes of certification.

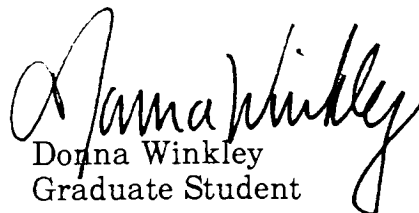
Your participation is absolutely confidential. The results of this study will only be used as a collective summary of information. If you would like to receive a copy of the summary, please include a business card when you return your questionnaire. The findings of this research will be shared with Suzie Tittle of Meeting Planners International and Donna Washington of The Convention Liaison Council.

Your timely response is critical. It is so important to us that we would like you to have the enclosed dollar as our thank you for your help. A response by no later than June 20, 1994, will be much appreciated.

Sincerely,



Ed Steffens, M.S.  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Graduate Studies  
Hospitality & Tourism Program



Donna Winkley  
Graduate Student



An important purpose of this study is to learn more about the nature of the work that a CMP does in meeting planning. Please respond to each question below.

- 1-never do
- 2-sometimes do
- 3-always do

(Circle your answer)

NEVER DO	SOMETIMES DO	ALWAYS DO
-------------	-----------------	--------------

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Setting budget guidelines.....1                        | 2 | 3 |
| 2. Maintaining budget authority and responsibility.....1  | 2 | 3 |
| 3. Hiring and firing employees.....1                      | 2 | 3 |
| 4. Delegating responsibilities to others.....1            | 2 | 3 |
| 5. Planning programs for meetings.....1                   | 2 | 3 |
| 6. Establishing meeting goals and objectives.....1        | 2 | 3 |
| 7. Negotiating with facilities.....1                      | 2 | 3 |
| 8. Selecting site and facilities.....1                    | 2 | 3 |
| 9. Handling reservations and housing.....1                | 2 | 3 |
| 10. Establishing reservation procedures.....1             | 2 | 3 |
| 11. Shipping materials.....1                              | 2 | 3 |
| 12. Planning function room setup.....1                    | 2 | 3 |
| 13. Coordinating with convention center or facility.....1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14. Briefing facilities staff.....1                       | 2 | 3 |
| 15. Managing exhibits.....1                               | 2 | 3 |
| 16. Managing food and beverage .....1                     | 2 | 3 |
| 17. Selecting speakers .....1                             | 2 | 3 |
| 18. Scheduling promotion and publicity.....1              | 2 | 3 |
| 19. Producing and printing meeting materials.....1        | 2 | 3 |
| 20. Evaluating - postmeeting.....1                        | 2 | 3 |

Please indicate how each statement below has been affected within six months of receiving the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) designation.

- decreased
- remained the same
- increased

(Check the box that best responds to your answer)

	DECREASED	REMAINED THE SAME	INCREASED
1. Number of employees supervised .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Number of meetings planned per year .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Budget allotment .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Approval of a meeting location (International, national, regional or local) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Job responsibilities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Salary level.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Site selection responsibilities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please answer the following questions by using six months of attaining the CMP designation as a guideline. If the question is not applicable please state so in the blank.

1. List one additional responsibility you have been given since you have been certified. \_\_\_\_\_
2. List one area of your budget that you have seen increase since you have been certified. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Did salaries of your employees increase after you received your designation?  
(Circle the appropriate answer)
 

1. no	2. do not supervise any employees	3. yes
-------	-----------------------------------	--------

To gain a better understanding of your meeting planning position please answer the following questions.

1. How many employees do you currently supervise? (Circle your answer)

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| 1. under 5 | 4. 16-20   |
| 2. 6-10    | 5. 21-25   |
| 3. 11-15   | 6. over 25 |

2. How many meetings are planned for the 1994 year? (Circle your answer)

- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| 1. under 10 | 4. 31-40   |
| 2. 11-20    | 5. 41-50   |
| 3. 21-30    | 6. over 50 |

3. The location of meetings that are planned include: (Circle all that apply)

- |                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| 1. International | 3. regional |
| 2. National      | 4. local    |

4. How many years have you worked in the current organization? (Circle your answer)

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. under 3 years | 4. 16-20 years   |
| 2. 4-10 years    | 5. 21-30 years   |
| 3. 11-15 years   | 6. over 30 years |

5. What was your budget for the 1993 year? (Circle your answer)

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. under \$50,000      | 5. \$750,001-\$1,000,000   |
| 2. \$50,001-\$250,000  | 6. \$1,000,001-\$1,500,000 |
| 3. \$250,001-\$500,000 | 7. \$1,500,001-\$1,750,000 |
| 4. \$500,001-\$750,000 | 8. over \$1,750,000        |

Finally, we would like to ask a few questions about yourself . This information will be kept confidential and used for data analysis only.

1. Your sex. (Circle your answer)

1. Male

2. Female

2. Your age. (Circle your answer)

1. under 25

4. 46-55

2. 26-35

5. over 55

3. 36-45

3. Indicate the highest educational level / degree you have attained. (Circle your answer)

1. High school

4. Bachelor's degree

2. Diploma / certificate

5. Post graduate work

3. Associate's degree

4. Years held Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) designation: \_\_\_\_\_ years

5. Years of meeting planning experience: \_\_\_\_\_ years

6. Type of meeting planner. (Circle your answer)

1. Corporate

4. Government

2. Association

5. Independent / Consultant

3. University / Education

6. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. What was your meeting planning salary before taxes in 1994? (Circle your answer)

1. Less than \$20,000

6. \$40,000-\$49,999

2. \$20,000-\$24,999

7. \$50,000-\$59,999

3. \$25,000-\$29,999

8. \$60,000-\$74,999

4. \$30,000-\$34,999

9. \$75,000-\$99,999

5. \$35,000-\$39,999

10. \$100,000 or more

8. Please indicate the percentage increase in your salary within six months of receiving the CMP designation. (Circle your answer)

1. less than 5%

6. 40%-49%

2. 5%-9%

7. 50%-74%

3. 10%-19%

8. 75%-89%

4. 20%-29%

9. more than 90%

5. 30%-39%

10. no change

**APPENDIX B**

**COVER LETTER AND SUMMARY**

School of Food, Hotel and Travel  
Management  
Department of Graduate Studies  
George Eastman Building  
10 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, New York 14623-5604  
716-475-5666 Fax 716-475-6401

July 20, 1994

Dear Certified Meeting Professional:

Your response to the recent questionnaire on "The impact of certification on Meeting Professionals" was valuable and included in the analysis of the data.

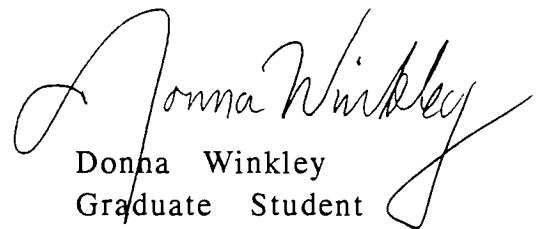
Enclosed is a summary of the responses in the aggregate that you requested. Although the data does not indicate a strong relationship between certification and the areas studied, it does indicate that additional research should be undertaken.

Thank you for taking the time to express your experience with certification. We appreciate your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,



Ed Steffens, M.S.  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Graduate Studies  
Hospitality & Tourism Program



Donna Winkley  
Graduate Student

## SUMMARY

Unlike some professions, the meeting planning industry does not require a certification designation for employment. Some meeting planners do not have formal training or education in meeting planning, but they do have a wealth of on-the-job learning. In 1985 the Convention Liaison Council (CLC) established a certification examination at the request of Meeting Planners International (MPI). This Council's Board continues to manage the certification program.

Currently, Meeting Planners International is the largest association of meeting professionals with more than 12,000 members in 42 countries. Within the membership there are 854 Certified Meeting Professionals.

This study examined the effects of certification on a random population of Certified Meeting Professionals in three areas: salary level; span of control; and skill level. A pretested questionnaire was mailed to 270 of these certified individuals.

From the responses, the data indicated that the typical CMP is a female between 36-45 years old who has earned a baccalaureate degree. She has approximately eight years of meeting planning experience with four plus years in a corporate or association setting. She has held the CMP

designation for approximately one year. In 1993, she coordinated a meeting planning budget of approximately \$775,000.

From the individuals (58.15%) who responded to this survey, it is clear that meeting planners who have earned the CMP designation did not show significant salary increases or job responsibilities within six months of certification. Span of control only slightly increased in this time frame.

Although the immediate impact for CMP's within six months of certification is not significant, there may be greater impact for meeting planners who have been certified for longer time periods. This needs to be studied. Further study also needs to be done to compare non-certified meeting planners to certified meeting professionals over the same time period.



